18: Savonnet E-5 (ca. 1955) 1956 MS37 Senegal

A New City of Senegal: Thiès
/Une ville neuve du Sénégal: Thiès/

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/Title page/

361 /70/ New countries present the peculiarity that their important cities are established along the coast, for example, in South America and in Australia. West Africa is no exception to this rule; Dakar, Conakry, Freetown, Monrovia, Abidjan, Accra ... are port cities. In contrast, cities in the interior are rarer; Bamako and Bobo-Dioulasso are important centers, but represent exceptions.

Thiès in Senegal does not entirely belong to either one of these categories. Located some 50 kilometers as the crow flies from the nearest port, it benefits from this proximity only in a very imperfect way. Nor is it a city of the interior; its economic relations with the port of Dakar do not permit such an appellation.

361 369 It is of recent creation and cannot, in contrast to Saint-Louis, Rufisque or Dakar, boast of a rich historic past (African or colonial); it no longer possesses that embryo of the old Creole middle class which would have been able to check its evolution toward the rapid formation of a more modern society, more Western in its conception. It is a new city that seems by a stroke of fate to have thrust out from the African bush as a kind of crossroads where the lines of modern communication have come to promote its fortune.

361 133 Before examining the different reasons which governed its implantation on such a site, it is advisable to place the city within the Senegalese countryside that surrounds it. When the traveler, leaving Dakar, takes the road or the railway which leads him to Saint-Louis, he leaves the Atlantic coast at the village of Bargny and then crosses the plain of Cape Verde over some 60 kilometers. A few moderate undulations occasionally break the monotony of the landscape; these are the Ndias "massifs." A little before the village of Pout, the eastern horizon is obstructed by a line of elevations giving the impression of sizable and brutal relief. Very soon, however, some ten kilometers from this village, one reaches the slope of Thiès. Its altitude is very slight; it culminates at 137 meters. The road and railway track ascend /71/ the face by a steep grade that makes use of a narrow defile called "Ravin des Voleurs" /Ravine of Thieves/. One quickly

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361 reaches the summit of the plateau.

[133] [137] The landscape which one then discovers seems more open: few trees or none at all; only a shrubby vegetation in the form of brush from which some baobab tops emerge. In the background there gradually appears the light color of the first houses of Thiès. The contrast between the green foliage of the city and the surrounding countryside, bare and yellow, blinding with light, is striking, especially in the dry season.

The aerial photograph, or better still the flight, makes this contrast appear even sharper. The city, with roughly triangular outlines and divided into large patches of geometrical squares flecked with innumerable dark spots of green foliage, stands out particularly sharply against the grey and [illegible]ted bush of the surroundings. The presence of an urban center on this almost unpopulated plateau seems strange, and one might wonder what reasons caused this not very hospitable site to be retained for the establishment of a relatively important city?

1. The History of Thiès

361 133 [104] [443] 1. The site.

The plateau on which the escale (1) has been built

1. "Escale" here means a place where caravans rested after the halt of the day's journey and where small-scale trade was carried on; by extension, a village or city-market generally located on a railway.

slopes slightly toward the east, while its western face forms a steep slope. Plateau and slope belong to geological formations 135 of the same date as those of the Cape Verde Peninsula and consist principally of limestone from the end of the Secondary/Mesozoic/ subsequently overlaid by a ferruginous shell. It is probable that the eastern section rose up and the western one sank in the Tertiary.

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133 The presence of a marl-calcareous horizon at a slight depth, the arrangement of the layers sloping toward the east, has favored the formation of a perpetual phreatic layer close to the surface and capable of supplying all the wells of the Thiès plateau.

The Thiès slope describes a concave line 40 kilometers long which begins in the north at the height of Mont-Rolland and ends abruptly in the south at the height of the village of [361] Tiao. The brow of the slope, with an average altitude of 100 meters, is cut broadly and deeply only by the "Ravin des Voleurs." At the foot of the slope there stretches a depressed, more or less swampy zone, /72/ /Fig. 1 appears here/ which borders it from north to south. Beyond Mont-Rolland, toward the northwest, accumulations of dune sand extend to the ocean (Fig. 1).

369 During the period of the pacification of Senegal by 175 Faidherbe, Thiès was only a small village of unruly Sérère-None /Serer/, pillagers of caravans when the occasion presented itself. This village was established near the actual site [361] of the Faidherbe Redoubt, in a shaded and cool spot, hence the name "Diankhène" which was given to it and which means place of repose.

In 1856 Dakar was founded, and Saint-Louis developed. [648] A treaty concluded with the damel of Cayor (2) authorized the

2. Damel. Wolof word meaning sovereign.

[206] installation of a telegraph line to connect these two cities. But the execution of the work came up against the ill-will of the damel and the continual insecurity that prevailed in the region of Thiès.

After the creation of the post of Mbidjem, near Lake Tanma, the /73/ post of Thiès was built in 1863. Its [361] role was to pacify and to cover, in case of necessity, [487] the troops that operated in the region. The latter, coming from Gorée and from Dakar, took the trail /piste/ from Rufisque to Pout and from there reached the post of Thiès and Cayor by way of the "Ravin des Voleurs," the only easy and direct passage that connected Cayor with the Cape Verde Peninsula.

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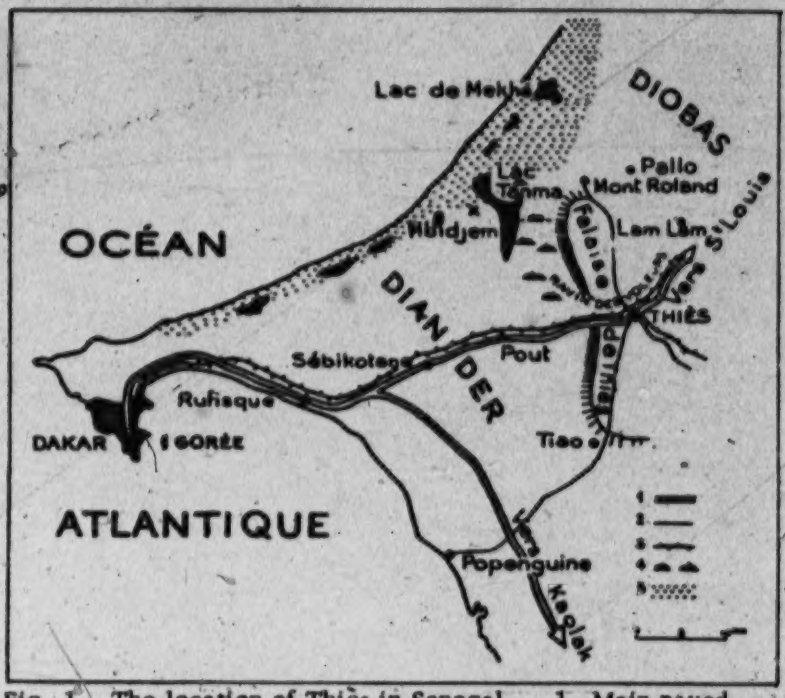

Fig. 1. The location of Thiès in Senegal. 1. Main paved road; 2. secondary road; 3. railroad; 4. swamps; 5. sand.

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Verde Peninsula. As long ago as this epoch Thiès seems to have been a strategic point and support point of primary importance.

As early as 1880 the provinces of Diander and Diobas were pacified. The military posts lost their importance and were abandoned one after the other, for example, Nguiguis (near Tivaouane) and Mbidjem. Only the one at Thiès, because of its exceptional location, survived and developed.

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2. The commercial escale (1880-1923).

The years of the decade 1880-1890 correspond to the period of the development of groundnut cultivation in Senegal and to the construction of the Dakar--Saint-Louis railroad.

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175 369 499 133 The surveys for the future course of this railway revealed that the shortest route would have to follow the Atlantic coast, but since this is bordered by dunes it would necessitate some important construction work. The passage across the slope of Thiès was also a serious obstacle, but the "Ravin des Voleurs" made access to the plateau possible; the line would thus follow the valley which cuts the brow of the hill, then the depression which follows the plateau to the east, and would pass in front of the military fort established at its extremity.

175 369 [361] The fortune of Thiès was made: as early as 1885, the date of the opening of the railroad, the merchants of Rufisque set up branches there; a plan for dividing the future city into lots was outlined. This plan, unfortunately, foresaw the development of the city only north of the line, along the trail connecting Thiès with Rufisque and Dakar. A Catholic [797] mission was established in the vicinity, and in 1893 the first civil administrator occupied the new residence built near the Faidherbe redoubt.

175 369 439 The groundnut policy developed successfully; 20,000 tons of groundnuts were shipped by rail from the Thiès station in 1890 (3). Commerce, however, was not established in

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3. Convoys of camels competed with the railway up to 1910 and transported their cargo to the port of Rufisque. Thiès was the last stop before reaching the quays of embarkation 50 kilometers away.

[366] [441] permanent fashion in the escale: only during the period of trading (from November to May) did the European employees sent by the firms of Rufisque live in the city and buy groundnuts, millet, cotton ... at their branches; from May to November they returned to Rufisque, and most of the shops in Thiès were closed, the city seemingly dead.

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175 The major part of the commerce was then concentrated
369 north of the railway; nevertheless, as early as 1895 some
[366] shops were established to the south, near the residence.

In 1890 Thiès had a permanent population of 1,200
[162] inhabitants. Some native quarters were established in the
175 vicinity of the commercial escale. The little village of
369 Thiès-None was shifted from the other side of the railway.
361 A native quarter was attached to the western part of the commercial zone; it was moved toward the south after the plague of 1911, and took the name of Randoulème (a word meaning in Wolof: remove yourself). Takhikao (storied house in Wolof), established originally near the first storied house belonging to Maurel and Prom, was ultimately pushed back along the route to Saint-Louis (Fig. 2).

175 Little by little, while the military function fell asleep,
369 the development of commerce brought stable economic
[366] activity to the city. Until 1914 the city grew very little,
[162] and its population amounted to only 2,400 inhabitants at that date; from 1885 to 1914 the city gained only 1,400 souls in all.

The military function of the city recovered part of its former importance during the war of 1914. The base of Thiès
[712] became a center of military training for new recruits. The quarter of Diakhao adjoining the camp was enlarged by the arrival of the families of the military. On the other hand, commerce was threatened during this period. The French
175 personnel, which since the beginning of the century had been
369 permanently established, was summoned to the colors. In
441 order to avoid shutting up shop, the Levantines were called
563 upon. The latter had made their appearance in Senegal as early as 1895 and up to that time had played only a very secondary role in the market of the city: selling candles, matches, beads... The war of 1914 facilitated their entry into the lucrative activity of trade.

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369 3. The establishment of industries (1923-1945).

498 The event which gave a decisive impulsion to the
[175] commercial escale and which brought Thiès to the rank of a city was without question the establishment of the railroad repair shops in 1923. As early as 1907 the first work had been undertaken to connect Thiès to Bamako directly by rail; difficulties of all kinds and then the war impeded it. In 1923 only the junction of the two sections had been made at Kidira on the Falémé. There was some concern to have the repair shops of the Thiès-Niger established in the center nearest the coast. Thiès, head of the line, was chosen as
[162] the center. In a few years the city grew by 10,000 souls, going from 3,000 inhabitants in 1921 to 13,000 in 1929.

369 The opening of the railroad yards not only brought about
441 the arrival of many workers and their families, but at the same /75/ /Fig. 2 appears here/ time gave a strong impulsion to commerce. The regular injection of credits by this new industry brought about a renewal of commercial activity which showed in the expansion of the firms already established and the creation of new stores. The Africans, who up
[472] to that time worked solely for the profit of firms under
[563] European management and who had been kept out of the retail business, opened small shops for their own profit (4).

[197] 4. It is the military, it seems, who brought back from France this idea of establishing for themselves small grocery stores copied from those encountered in the villages of the mother country.

The latter, appealing to an essentially native clientele, multiplied as soon as the economic scope of the city increased. At the same time the number of artisans increased.

[563] After the war, the Levantines, who had been the only ones able to carry on commerce in complete tranquility for four years, set up businesses for themselves. Their experience

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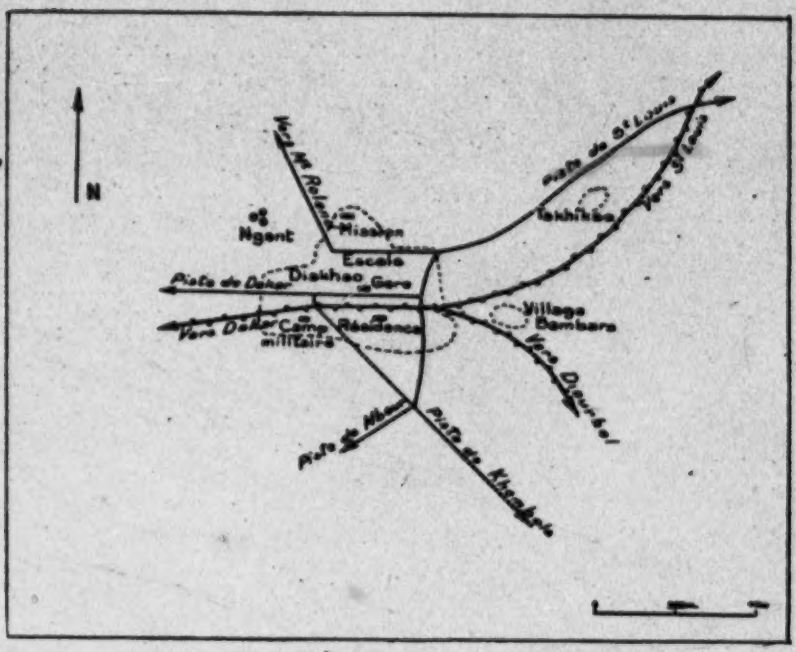

Fig. 2. Thiès in 1910.

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acquired during the period of hostilities, their knowledge of the language, and their great aptitude for adapting themselves to the customs of the country and for living under very curtailed conditions /76/ made these newcomers serious competitors whom French commerce tried, but in vain, to eliminate. All the concessions of the northern escale were now occupied (5); the

5. There was no question of extending the first lots farther to the north; the concession ceded to the Mission prevented such an extension.

newcomers -- chiefly Syrians -- set up their factorerie (6) in the

[443]

6. Factorerie: shop where everything is sold and where at the same time

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369 441 563 443 local products (groundnuts, millet ...) are bought or bartered for.

still almost empty quarter of the residence.

369 433 458 Already the economic equilibrium of the city was no longer essentially based on the commerce of trade, subject to price fluctuations, but also on the budding industry which assured it a certain stability. It is true that the latter, barely acquired, was put to a harsh test during the world crisis from 1930 to 1934. In the course of this difficult period the price of the groundnut slumped. The old commercial firms which depended solely on the trading were no longer able to meet their payments and liquidate their stock: Société Française du Sénégal, the firms Lacombe, Latrille... The sounder establishments were themselves obliged to close their city branches temporarily, for example, Peyrissac, Maurel Frères. Nevertheless one did not see here a complete slump in commerce with spectacular failures such as occurred in Dakar, but rather commercial liquidations, sales of stocks that were repurchased by Levantines and wholesale companies.

[471] [563] The effects of the crisis, which ended in 1934, resulted in a redistribution of commercial ownership, a readaptation of commerce to the new requirements, along with the definitive establishment of the Levantines.

369 498 433 At this date the fusion of the two railroad companies, the Dakar--Saint-Louis and Thiès-Niger, stimulated an expansion of the industrial quarter by regrouping at Thiès the workshops originally installed at Dakar for the Dakar--Saint-Louis railway.

369 [162] [511] [361] On the eve of the Second World War the city reached the figure of 22,000 inhabitants, 1,200 of them Europeans. The almost complete disappearance of epidemics, the better food supply, the construction of comfortable houses (Ballabey district created as early as 1925 for the railway workers, villas for officers) permit metropolitan families to settle in a permanent fashion. In a parallel manner, the native

/76 cont./

369 quarters spread out toward the southwest in the vicinity of
361 the workshops: "Derrière la voie ferrée /Behind the Railroad/" and "Bambara" developed on the outskirts of "Randoulène."

4. Thiès, industrial and strategic city (after 1945).

369 The Second World War temporarily slowed down the
712 economic activity of the city. As in 1914, one saw a /77/ very earnest renewal of the military function: an autonomous motorized detachment (D.M.A.) was established in the old military camp which was considerably enlarged; an air base created a little before 1940 doubled the one of Ouakam installed at the gates of Dakar and now inadequate.

The experience of the last war had demonstrated the possible vulnerability of Dakar. Strategy demanded the formation of a strong base in the rear areas of the capital of French West Africa to support it if the need arose. The location and the proximity of Thiès met these requirements. In order to give maximum effectiveness to this enterprise, the means of communication between the two cities had to be improved, the military camps reorganized and modernized.
[491] A strong and wide road was built between these two cities. Its course was different from that of the old trail; it entered Thiès not from the west but from the south. The military camp covered several dozen hectares, the installations of the air base were improved and enlarged, and the annexes permitted the permanent establishment of officers and troops (Fig. 4).

369 From 1947 to 1952 intense activity prevailed in the
361 city. The entire district, except the old escale, formed a veritable workshop where vast avenues cut across the native quarters, where plazas were created, where zones of green
[498] were distributed. In the industrial precinct of the Dakar-Niger, new workshops intended for the repair of Diesel tractors and the construction of passenger coaches were installed. New villas along more modern lines for officials and railway workers rose almost everywhere in the city. The old escale, paralyzed within too narrow limits, was aroused

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369 and attempted as far as possible to renovate the lines of its
361 architecture and to offer to its clientele pleasant salesrooms with tastefully arranged windows and displays.

The native quarters for their part were enlarged and improved, penetrating deeply into the neighboring bush. The quarters of "Randoulène-Sud" /South Randoulene/, of "Grand Thiès" /Greater Thiès/, and of "Médina" were new creations. Diakhao and Takhikao develop. Some African officials and
[342] merchants have since begun some construction of small villas in durable material that replace the traditional straw hut or the simple plank hut.

[162] The growth of the population was considerable; from 24,000 in 1945, it reached 40,000 inhabitants in 1953, 2,700 of whom were Europeans.

369 Thus, from the founding of the first military post near
433 the village of Thiès-None up to our time, the growth of Thiès has been accomplished without any shocks. It has not known the great hopes of Dakar, the depressions, the failures of Rufisque and Saint-Louis. The /78/ wars, the crises are shown in the graph of its evolution only as simple plateaus (7).

7. G. Savonnet, "Evolution démographique de la ville de Thiès /Demographic Evolution of the City of Thies/, "Notes africaines, pp. 122-124.

369 Its fortune, as we have tried to show, comes from its
361 exceptional site at the entrance of the sole path of access to
433 the plateau of Thiès, along with the relative proximity of Dakar. Through the action of these three essential functions, commercial, industrial, and military, it enjoys an economic equilibrium that seems more stable than that of the other cities of Senegal.

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2. The Quarters

1. The quarters of European type.

361 563 If we eliminate the two military bases that offer very special characteristics peculiar to their internal organization, Thiès contains three quarters of Western conception: the Cité Ballabey /Ballabey District/, the Vieille Escale /Old Escale/, the Résidence. While the first shelters a population almost wholly European, in the other two the Whites are in the minority (one White to four Blacks).

No systematic segregation really exists in the city. The Cité Ballabey itself is a district for operatives belonging to the managerial staffs; it is in no way closed to Africans who have reached the rank required by their establishment. Although located near the workshops, it is a quiet zone. Its park is magnificent. The villas there are arranged regularly 351 according to a checkerboard plan in the purest colonial style. [342] Each square of the checkerboard is occupied by a villa divided into two twin and symmetrical apartments; courtyards and gardens extend out on all sides of the dwelling; some mango trees with dense foliage shelter the rabbit hutches, the hen house, and the garage from the heat of the sun. It is easy 341 to date the construction of each of them by its architectural 342 style: the pink brick corresponds to the years 1925-1930; the reinforced concrete, painted light beige, dates from after the war... The quarters of the D. M. A. and of the air base, with some variations, show almost no originality of their own and are comparable to the Cité Ballabey.

The Old Escale presents the appearance of a quarter [363] in a Mediterranean city: narrow streets bordered by storied buildings built out of the white limestone from Bargny; a small, light balcony with a metal balustrade projects over the sidewalk and runs from one end of the building to the other; a very slightly sloping red tile roof under a blue sky accentuates this impression of the Mediterranean world.

351 Each concession, square in plan, forms a regular block of

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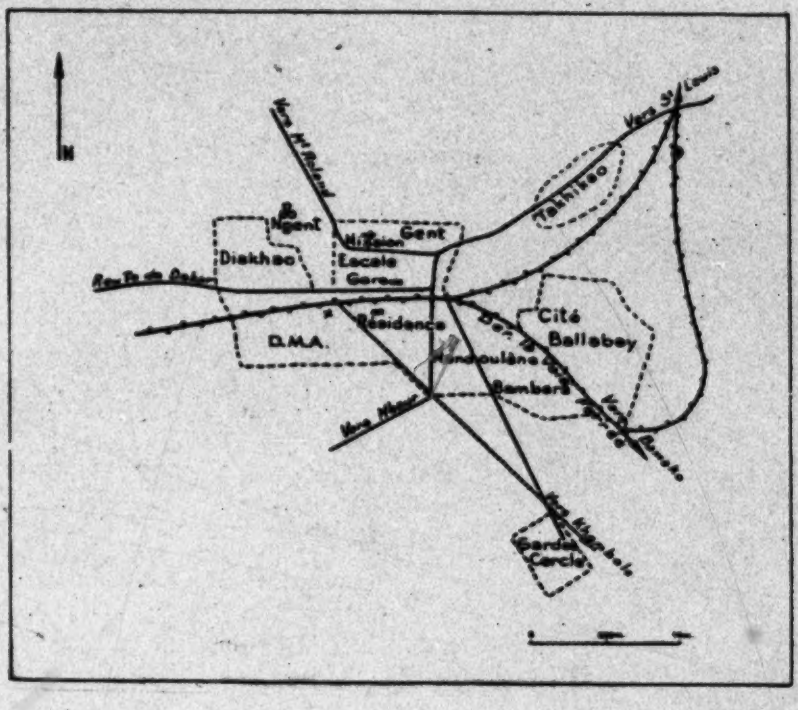

Fig. 3. Thiès in 1940.

351 buildings pierced here and there by a portal which gives access to the courtyards, always littered, of the shop or workshop. /79/
/Fig. 3 appears here./

361 One now sees a modification of this oldish architecture and
[341] attempts at renovation. This quarter, built essentially for commercial purposes, did not leave any space free for expansion; no plaza, no small garden offers a pleasant spot in this assemblage dedicated essentially to trade.

The quarter of the Residence is quieter, and also cooler. The arrangement of the settlement pattern is looser; the houses
[351] are spread out, and each is separated from its neighbor by a kitchen garden, a courtyard, or a small pleasure garden. Near the administrative buildings care has even been taken to reserve and arrange some public squares in the shade of immense Gambia

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361 mahoganies planted at the end of the last century. The very close presence of the station, and the continual coming and going of locomotives, with strident cries that rend the air, destroys the harmony of these quiet spots of small provincial cities, while attempts are made to recreate them.

361 346 Even more peaceful air is breathed in the Catholic Mission, located to the north of the old "escale." The buildings were constructed at the end of the last century in red laterite, storied buildings /80/ with monastery arcades. They are situated in the middle of a huge garden, always green, extended by a park of magnificent trees. The whole reminds one to some extent of the peaceful site of some metropolitan abbey.

361 563 443 The two business quarters (Old Escale and Residence) present the peculiarity of becoming, according to the time of day, the domain of the European in the evening (at the hour for the apéritif) and on Sundays, and that of the African during the day (while the market is open). A place of contact between the Black and the White, this market occupies a very important place in the life of the African city and merits pausing there a bit.

443 [438] It is on the day of the opening of the groundnut trade (at the beginning of December, for example) that it is proper to visit it. On coming from the station one plunges suddenly into the animation, the dust, the heat, the "sticky" odors of the market. The place is swarming with people where the most diverse means of locomotion are squeezed and mingled together: a small cinder-gray donkey, heavily laden, deciding to block the passage of an automobile, despite the beating by its master; a small, light cart with two rubber wheels serving as a taxi and in quest of a possible passenger; a housewife from the neighboring village, her last-born hanging on her back, and who keeps on her head, in marvelous balance, a calabash full of market produce; a cyclist, poorly balanced on his machine, now and again running into a pedestrian or a vehicle; a truck with impressive loads, which slowly pushes from the road the human

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443 flood rapidly closing in again behind it. All these noisy peo-
[493] ple carry with them a flavor of the neighboring bush, warm and dusty.

The market of dried fish readily reveals itself by the strong odor that it gives off; farther on is the stall of the
[563] butcher for Europeans; very close to it the merchant of the tripe trade who grills some skewers of small pieces on a charcoal fire. Elsewhere the sellers of colas, of condiments and cloth from Guinea, the cobblers offering their products among the very mixed odors in a halo of dust raised by the crowd. It is a delight for the eyes to see, in the bright sunlight under a very clear and pure blue sky, the shimmer of full garments of vivid hues moving with deliberation and majesty.

443 The animation reaches its greatest intensity between
512 nine and ten o'clock in the morning; the pedestrian is king, he blocks all traffic. Then, little by little, sellers and buyers disperse, and everyone falls into a blessed torpor at the noon hour. The afternoon is quiet, and at five o'clock each merchant has left his premises. This animation, which has only a temporary character in the commercial quarters of /Plates XI and XII appear here/ /81/ European type, is permanent in certain native quarters, but with a maximum amplitude in the evening after work.

2. The native quarters.

361 The native quarters also have their peculiar characteristics, a function of their antiquity, of their proximity or their distance from a center of activity, and, naturally, of the social category of their inhabitants.

Takhikao and Gent were among the first quarters created. Except for the nearness of the road from Thiès to Tivaouane, which attracts the merchants' small shops of planks or straw, they have kept their rural character: dwell-
[351] ings arranged in a loose order, surrounded by an orchard protected by a tapade /walling/ of branches or stalks of millet.

[Text continues on p. 18]

18: Savonnet--16 E-5 (ca. 1955) 1956 MS37 Senegal MS37
/Between pp. 80 and 81./

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A. Thiès. Quarter of Derrière-la-voie-ferrée. Juxtaposition of houses of mud covered with sheet metal, sheet metal, and of straw.

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B. The site of one of the oldest mosques of Thiès: quarter of Takhikao.

18: Savonnet--17 E-5 (ca. 1955) 1956 MS37 Senegal MS37
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Plate XII

A. Thiès. The Takhikao square after winter.

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B. Thiès. Market scene.

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361 millet. The old people assemble in the evening under the [517] large silk-cotton tree that shades the old crumbling mosque of Takhikao. The women chatter while awaiting their turn to [312] draw water at the common well, while the children play in [342] the sand. Gent stands out because of a series of small, low houses with a rectangular base and a roof of corrugated metal, all identical and set along the trail that leads to the marigot /watercourse/ of the mission. A garden and a courtyard, al- [351] ways littered with laundry, characterize each concession. It [563] is the quarter of Portuguese half-breeds called "portugalais" (Plates XI B and XII A).

Diakhao-Nord /North Diakhao/, quiet, airy, arranged [363] according to a strict plan of lots, contrasts with Diakhao-Sud w ith narrow, winding lanes bordered on all sides by tapades of millet stalks and noisy in the evening. The proximity of [275] the two military bases has made it a place where one amuses [525] himself with all that this includes in the way of drinking [579] shops and more or less clandestine gambling dens. Brawls between drunken men are not rare in these places.

Randoulène, Derrière-la-voie-ferrée, and Bambara, which form a unique quarter, homogeneous in its density and in the heterogeneity of its dwellings, have become established in the immediate vicinity of the railroad repair shops. The [342] huts of planks, mud, or straw stand one against the other along [363] the winding lanes laid out according to the desire of the moment and not without some imagination. These lanes are [373] noisy with people, and even late at night they walk between the small shopkeepers' stalls lighted with smoking candle ends. 351 The dense crowd flows over the edges of the street and enters the interior of the courtyards. The latter, covering barely a few square meters, often serve as a workshop for the [463] weaver, the blacksmith, or the jeweler, and as a kitchen for [252] the housewives of the neighboring huts; it is not rare to see half a dozen millet pounders there, pounding their mortars in rhythm in groups of two or three. This is also the gathering [517] place /82/ /Fig. 4 appears here/ of workers, where, after [524] work, sitting in the sand amidst the dust and the noise, in a

18: Savonnet--19 E-5 (ca. 1955) 1956 MS37 Senegal

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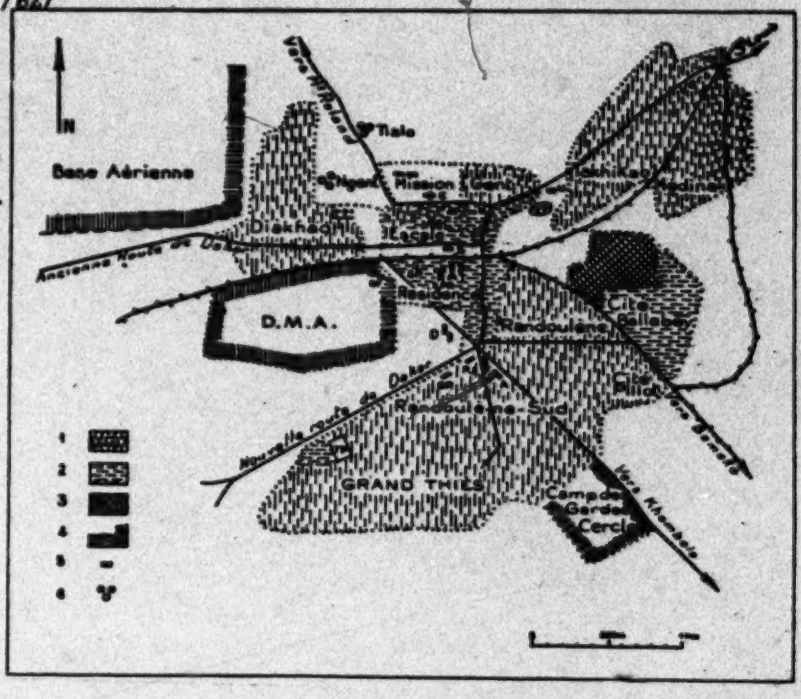

Fig. 4. Thies in 1954.

1. Residential zone of Africans; 2. Residential zone of Europeans; 3. Industrial zone; 4. Military bases;5. Administrative and religious buildings; 5. Village. E-- Catholic church; U-- Mosque; V-- Posts; C-- College; L-- Police; S-- Station; N-- Gendarmery; P-- Primary school; RF-- Faidherbe Redoubt; SP-- Société de Prévoyance /Welfare Society/; M-- Town Hall. T-- Treasury; R-- Residence of the Commander of the Circle; Pr-- Prison; D-- Dispensary; TP-- Public Works; PJ-- Palace of Justice; GR-- Bus station; P-- Collector's office. A-- Firemen.

/82 cont./

35 heat heavily laden with the most diverse odors, they play
517 cards or checkers. There is no question in such crowded
524 quarters of removing all the household rubbish and used water.
364 It is frequent in the course of walks within this zone to run into piles of refuse or to cross several ditches full of stagnant, dirty, and malodorous water. Sometimes at a bend in a street one is surprised to discover some straw huts in the middle of a spacious courtyard (Plate XI A).

361 The quarters of the south, newly divided into lots, re-
351 mind one of that of North Diakhao with its embryos of streets intersecting at a right angle, /83/ its huts arranged in a loose order inside each square and huddled in the shade of mango trees.

Each concession of Médina, in distinct geometric forms, marked off by tapades of millet stalks, is of a meticulous neatness that contrasts with the other quarters of the city.
795 This strict order, this rigid arrangement where all imagination is banished, is a reflection of the peculiar character of the Moslem Murid sect that occupies it.

361 The Cité Pillot, finally, built for the higher operatives and the specialized workers of the Dakar-Niger, to the south of the Bamako railroad, gives the appearance of a series of buildings that resemble those of barracks. The arrangement
342 of the new constructions is that of small houses with twin apartments.

369 Thus, each of the European-type quarters, like the native quarters, possesses some particular trait or even its own individuality, which seems to correspond to a definite social structure: milieu of merchants, millieu of officials, milieu of artisans, of laborers, of cultivators.

At the same time, each stage of its evolution has stamped this or that part of the city with its original imprint, which makes it possible to follow quite easily the successive periods of its expansion.

/83 cont./

3. The Activities of the City

1. Commerce.

433 If we except the period of conquest, during which a handful of troops established themselves in the entrenched camp, the primary function of Thiès was commerce.

441 433 An escale of trade in its beginnings, Thiès has remained that up to our times. Almost 25,000 tons of groundnuts are commercialized each year in spite of the opening of important points of trade in the vicinity, Tivaouane, Khombole, located some 30 kilometers from there. This commerce demands a certain taste for risk; if in certain years it offers appreciable profits, it sometimes renders the balance sheet of the merchants who practice it very precarious. The groundnut trade, as far as purchase from the producer is concerned, is almost entirely in the hands of the [563] Levantines and a few Moors and Blacks. The important [442] establishments, N. O. S. O. C. O. (8) and the Soucail firm,

8. N. O. S. O. C. O. Nouvelle Société Commerciale.

engage only in wholesale trade.

443 The factorerie run by a Levantine (9) next to the

[162] [563] 9. The Levantines are 48 in number, namely, 23 Syrians and 25 Lebanese (figures of 1952).

courtyard of the secco (10) has kept all its picturesqueness

[257] 10. Secco: mass of groundnuts stored in the courtyard of the merchant and destined for export.

[438] up to our day. /84/ Everything is sold there, from the piece of trade cloth in vivid colors to cheap perfume; kerosene by the liter and millet by the kilo or sack are retailed there.

/84 cont./

443 One corner of the plank counter, polished by the hands of
[275] customers, is often reserved for the sale of beverages that are drunk from the bottle itself. Boards and piles of sacks block the passage of the customers. There is a constant coming and going of possible customers who pass the shop fully open to the street. Some stay there for hours without buying, solely to feast their eyes. The patient Levantine,
[437] arguing about the price in the native language, supervises the weights and inspects the sacks of groundnuts in order to take out the stones that may have slipped into them. The factorerie type makes it possible to imagine exactly what the commerce of the escale must have been in the first years of its establishment in the city.

European commerce is totally different. To be sure, there are still some factoreries of the type that we have just described, but for some years a real effort at modernization has changed their appearance; they are becoming metropolitan-type stores with counters of plywood, shelves of canned
[438] goods, novelties from Paris... A luxury store was opened in 1950, offering buyers the latest goods from the capital: gowns, shorts, suits for men, curios of all sorts. But the nearness of Dakar, the ease of access to it, its attraction seem to be seriously limiting its sales potential.

442 The branches of the large commercial houses, N.O.
443 S.O.C.O., Maurel and Prom, C.F.A.O. (11), are eight in

11. C.F.A.O.: Compagnie Française d'Afrique Occidentale.

number and practically control the local market. Each is still established in its original concession in the interior of the old escale. The courtyard that formerly held the groundnuts has been remodeled into a warehouse; the retail store has been modernized: tiling, frigidaire, and cold rooms, as well as huge shop windows that replace the small windows of former times. The wholesale store, on the other hand, has preserved its disorder: bags of cement, boards,

/84 cont./

442 443 iron for cement, tires...piled loosely together. The activity of these branches is based on three elements: retail with a sales store open to the average customers, wholesale granted to the important factoreries (Levantines...), and wholesale to the small shopkeepers for retail. Each is furthermore an implement dealer with exclusive right of sale granted to them: frigidaires, motor fuel, automobiles...The figure [433] for the monthly business of one of them fluctuated between 20 and 25 million in 1953.

443 An intermediate type of commerce was established a short time ago with the arrival of the Moroccans; they [563] numbered 25 in 1952. /85/ Some among them attempt to [162] corner both the European and native clientele. They special- [438] ize in the sale of fabrics and fancy articles for Africans: [191] babouches, fezzes, cheap watches. They speak the native language fluently and sometimes French extremely well.

The Africans, as we have seen, have launched into private business since 1920. Some of them have a factorerie of the Levantine type, but most of them have opened a shop in the outlying quarters. The Moors and the Blacks share this small-scale commerce: in 1952 the former reached the figure of 120; the Blacks were perhaps as numerous. They [347] are installed in the small shops of boards or mud roofed with straw or with corrugated metal. On the counter, made up of a simple board, stands a Roberval scale, some jars of large multicolored bonbons, a pasteboard box filled with dry biscuits. The bag of charcoal on the floor stands beside a tin of kerosene. Some cola nuts kept fresh in a wrapping of leaves still green, a kilo of sugar broken open, which is sold by the lump, some packages of cigarettes sold by the unit, and small cans of condensed milk give a glimpse of the small volume of their business.

To complete this picture, let us add the innumerable small "doorstep" merchants who on a piece of cloth or in a calabash display a few handfuls of roasted peanuts and cola nuts, a package of cigarettes, or millet fritters. These small stalls are all located in front of the door of the hut;

/85 cont./

443 while the housewife attends to her tasks, the oldest child makes the sale (12).

12. According to an economic investigation made by Mr. Mersadier in Thiès, the returns from these sales[1] do not exceed ten francs profit per day (Bulletin de l'I.F.A.N., July-Oct., 1955, series B, p. 411).

[434] [433]

Thus, the commerce in Thiès (and certainly in most of the cities of French West Africa) is diffused among all of the layers of the society and at the same time has adapted itself extremely well there. The branches of important commercial houses, which in the beginning were violently opposed to this diffusion not controlled directly by them, quickly understood all the benefits that they could draw from this new situation.

463 Paralleling this extension of commerce, the working class, to a more limited extent, has also taken on much greater importance. To the traditional artisans, potters, jewelers, and smiths have been added activities more modern in inspiration: photographers, clockmakers, repairers of phonographs, bicycles, or even trucks, and, in another category of enterprises, small restaurant keepers and /86/ proprietors of drink shops. Finally, the establishment of European artisans (hairdressers, pastry cooks, etc.) is a specific phenomenon of the social evolution in African cities since the last war, and Thiès is not escaping it.

[265] [275] [178]

2. Industry.

498 The industrial activity of Thiès gravitates principally around the repair shops of the Dakar-Niger (13). The

13. The two phosphate quarries opened by the Société Péchiney some 15 kilometers from the city (Pallo and Lam-Lam)

[317] [464] [162]

1 [ie, by "doorstep" merchants - ANALYST]

/86 cont./

498
[317]
464
[162]

hardly affect its economy because of the limited number of its workers (200 to 300) and above all the distance from the urban center.

concession of the Dakar-Niger located a short distance from the city would actually form the most important industrial [162] center of French West Africa in terms of the number of its operatives (around 2,500 in 1952). It groups within its enclosure a series of the most diverse workshops: woodworking shop, sawmill, assembly shops for railroad cars, tinsmith shop, and even a foundry. Putting new Diesel tractors into service has brought about the recent creation of new shops where manifold improved machines operate. Power is taken [317] from a high tension line of 30,000 volts coming from Dakar. The enterprise annually consumes 1,700,000 kilowatt-hours, that is to say, more than the total consumption of the city itself. The much smaller consumption of coke and of fuel oil used in the furnace and cupolas of the foundries should be added here.

The workshops of the Dakar-Niger present themselves in the form of an industry with vertical integration of an incomplete type. The distance from the mother country, the expenses and above all the slowness of shipments (principally during the last World War) have brought about the installation of an industrial complex that makes it possible to satisfy the greater part of the demands of the work required for the smooth functioning of the service. All the woodworking is carried out in the sawmill-carpentry section; the cars are assembled from imported chassis, wheels, and bogies. Most of the parts of the locomotives can be smelted in Thiès, except when it is a matter of special alloys. Certain elements demanding a machine-finishing precision of 1/100 of a millimeter for Diesel tractors have already been manufactured by the enterprise. Only the parts requiring very special techniques or machines for their manufacture, or whose

S 498 /86 cont./ manufacturing cost would be high if they were smelted in Senegal, are bought on the outside.

S 498 463 563 Originally the repair work, the machining of locomotive parts or of rolling stock, necessitated only the presence of good mechanics. But putting into service more powerful engines that no longer run on charcoal but on fuel oil requires /87/ precise inspection and minute repairs made by experienced specialists. Most of them are still Europeans, but already some Africans have the technical training required for this delicate work.

S [162] The enterprise, however, has only a small percentage of Whites: out of 2,500 railway workers there were only 140 Europeans in 1953. And most of the worked in the offices (one European to eight natives); in the workshops this proportion reached only one to 40. While most of the metropolitan specialists are taken from the staffs of the S.N.C.F., the African specialists are recruited from among the students S [874] coming from the technical schools of Terrasson-de-Fougères in Bamako or William-Ponty in Dakar and from among the former mechanics of the arsenals of the national marine. They constitute the supervisory staffs in the different shops.

The ordinary workers, founders, hammermen, carpenters ...., have generally been trained in the very workshops of the Dakar-Niger where they work for a number of years. Finally, the non-specialized work is done by newcomers from the bush.

S 498 563 An investigation carried out in 1952 on a quarter of the total number (834) enables one to learn the ethnic composition of all the workshops. One can note a preeminence of the number of Wolof (301); the Peul and W 498 Toucouleur /Tukolor/ number 189; the Bambara come 162 third with 115 individuals. It is necessary to add 39 463 Sarakolé, 40 Khassonké /Kassonke/, and 79 workers belonging to different groups. This list gives an idea of the important mingling of individuals that make up this industrial center. One observes, nevertheless, that the

S 498 563 W 498 162 463 /87 cont./ workers from the regions neighboring Thiès are not in the majority; the Wolof-Sérère group is made up of 380 units, 45% of the total. Besides, the Wolof and Sérère /Serer/ offer relatively few technicians and supervisory operatives; the Wolof make up only 7% in the supervisory category as against 24% in that of manual workers; the Sérère account for only 5% in the first category and 39% in the second. On the other hand, 17% of the Khassonké and Sarakolé belong to the supervisory staffs as against only 22% of the manual workers and employees. These figures underline the difficulty for the enterprise in recruiting specialized workers in the vicinity of Thiès. It must call upon technicians from distant territories, although a high percentage of non-specialized workers and manual laborers are recruited locally.

S 498 433 Because of the number of its total labor force, the industrial grouping of the Dakar-Niger forms one of the most active elements of the economy of the district. More than 25,000,000 francs C.F.A. are distributed monthly in the form of salaries to all of the personnel.

/88/

3. The Public sector.

S 712 433 Although the installation and extension of the two military camps have in an indirect way increased the importance of the city, it indeed seems that they have little influence on the economy of the district on account of their internal organization within a closed circuit.

S 647 464 The establishment of increasingly more numerous and substantial administrative services affects the economic life of the escale in a more tangible fashion. The administration of the circle /cercle, an administrative district/ and the services for agriculture, education, and public works employ several hundred officials, day laborers, and manual workers.

/88 cont./

871 Education has developed in a remarkable fashion; each year more than 2,000 school children attend the public and private schools. The number of young pupils also has increased steadily, but only for the past dozen years. The modern college, because of its inadequate size, refuses numerous requests for admission every year. In spite of the annual opening of new classes, it can be estimated that only one child out of three of school age attends school.

369 563 4. The Social Structure of the City

1. The Whites.

In 1955 we are far from the heroic epoch when Thiès was considered an unhealthy place and when the mortality was very high. The arrival of the first European families at the beginning of this century could be considered an important event. It marked the possibility of permanently implanting a white colony in the escale.

The climate has been made more bearable by the many improvements in comfort that have created a propitious atmosphere for the establishment of family life. [162] In 1953 there were almost 1,200 women out of 2,700 Whites.

369 563 573 The European population is divided into a certain number of "milieus": army, operatives of the Dakar-Niger, officials, merchants. Contact between any of these assemblages is very loose: with few exceptions the relations between individuals belonging to different groups are not very frequent; there is visiting only among people of the same background. The transfer of personnel, which is repeated every two years, has the result that the time of residence is not ordinarily long enough for a newcomer to break away from his milieu. A certain apathy and a lack of curiosity limit these human contacts with neighboring groupings.

The armed forces, and Dakar-Niger, because of the very conception of their internal organization, live in isolation. Each of them has its co-operative, its club, its

/88 cont./

369 bar, and sometimes its cinema and its swimming pool; /89/
563 they form a small city that is self-sufficient. The officers
573 of the administration by their very functions seem to have more extensive relations in the different milieus.

Among the merchants and artisans, the problem is different because of the very stability of their work and the length of their stay. In this commercial and artisan milieu one could define three very distinct "groupings": the "old ones" who have lived in Thiès for several decades; the "newcomers" from after the war; the Levantine-Moroccan grouping.

The first are not very numerous; they live in their old factorerie, which, in spite of recently added arrangements, preserves something old-fashioned about it. They are able to [191] talk to the native in his own language. Their life, while it has become more comfortable, is lived modestly; they go out little and entertain only among themselves. Every two [484] or three years they take a few months' rest in France during the season of cultivation in Senegal. As a result, their life is quite withdrawn.

The second group, made up of recent emigrants, is entirely different. It primarily contains bachelors or young married people more or less in love with adventure perhaps, but above all seeking a broader existence. They generally [427] live in one or two rooms rented from a Levantine or Moroccan. [265] Since it is difficult for them to cook at home, the restaurant [484] provides for them. In general they adopt a careless attitude, [493] are restless, and speak loudly; their first savings are intended for the purchase of a motorcycle or a small car which will enable them to escape from the city. Moreover, they are [546] persistent spectators at the four local cinemas, which have a new program every day.

The group of Levantines is different from the two preceding ones; their life is spent between their shop and their [484] apartment. Rare changes take them to Dakar on business. [353] Their interior is comfortable, arranged according to Oriental taste; they love vivid colors and pile up cushions. They [484] rarely go back to their country of origin; some of them have

S /89 cont./
369 not left Africa for 30 or 40 years. Others, more favored by
563 business, take a trip each year to France or western Asia.
573 Generally, the children pursue their studies in their parents'
484 land of origin and speak French and English fluently. This
191 new generation of Levantines, to whom one must add a few
529 Moroccans, is becoming integrated little by little in the
578 metropolitan milieu through the medium of sports associa-
477 tions and hunting parties. These amicable relations will perhaps favor to a certain degree a closer relationship between these groups which are so often antagonistic on the commercial level.

/90/

2. The Africans.

S According to the census statistics gathered in 1953, the
369 ethnic composition of the city was the following: out of an
563 African population of 36,050 inhabitants, the Wolof appeared
162 as the most numerous and, with 23,624 individuals, made
W up 65.5% of the population; the Toucouleur, numbering
162 3,356, represent 9.3% of the total; the Bambara (Sudanese,
369 rather) attained third place and accounted for 6.8% of the population with 2,447 individuals; the Sérère, although settled in the vicinity of Thiès, included only 1,856 persons, namely, 5.1% of the total. The Peul and the Moors, respectively 1,074 and 843 individuals, made up 3% and 2.4% of the total. The Sarakolé and the various other groups, represented, respectively, by 650 and 2,190 members, formed 1.8% and 6.1% of the population.

W These details speak eloquently of the ethnic hetero-
162 geneity of the Thiès population. Still, it should be empha-
369 sized that the number of true Wolof is certainly less than the
563 statistical figure given; after a stay of some ten years spent in Thiès, the Khassonké or the Sarakolé, who will have lost almost all contact with his country of origin, who will have married a woman not of his race, who will have adopted the language, the food, the corresponding Wolof name, will speak of himself as belonging to this group.

/90 cont./

369 563 [161] As one may well imagine, the most populated zones are the ones located near the railroad workshops; Derrière-la-voie-ferrée, Randoulène, and Bambara have densities from 102 to 125 inhabitants per hectare (14). These quarters are

14. In French Equatorial Africa, in the quarters of Brazzaville (Poto-Poto and Bacongo), it reaches 100 inhabitants per hectare. Information taken from Documents and Statistics, Ministry of the F. O. M., No. XI, March 1954, p. 25.

at the same time the places of the most complete intermingling; almost 40% of the population is made up of elements foreign to the region of Thiès where Wolof and Sérère live.

We quote these figures, of course, in order to pose the problem of contacts between the various ethnic groups and of the relations between individuals.

369 563 573 Nevertheless, we should set apart the Moor group, whose conduct clearly differs from that of its colored neighbors. The Moors do not have any relations with the Blacks, except for purely commercial reasons. They meet only among themselves, travel only accompanied by one of their fellows. Their sobriety, their sense of thrift (often carried to excess), and their frigid calm estrange them from the often expansive temperament of the Blacks. Perhaps a certain feeling of superiority toward the population which they dominated before our arrival is the origin of this profound gap between people of identical material circumstances.

369 563 [182] /91/ The Black masses seem at first estimate to form a homogeneous whole. Nevertheless, among the elements which compose it there exist traditional distinctions of customary, ethnic, and religious origin, and social distinctions linked to recent structures: a new hierarchy in the

/91 cont./

369 563 [182] [565] [466] industrial enterprises and in the public function. Even in a professional category a certain hierarchy of a traditional order survives and is always respected. In the workshops of the Dakar-Niger, for example, the higher supervisory staffs are made up of workers belonging to superior castes: free men, descendants of chiefs' families... Operatives coming from families of griots or former captives, in spite of their skill at the work and their training, would have only very weak authority over their subordinates.

[578] The animosities between individuals belonging to formerly hostile groups or to opposed religious sects may sometimes reappear in the course of contacts between individuals or groups of individuals. Along the same line [466] of thought, a certain favoritism may creep into the relations between foreman and subordinates belonging to the same ethnic category or the same religion.

369 563 573 Within each ethnic minority scattered through the city spontaneous associations spring up, led by the oldest among them. These friendly groups meet periodically. They are at the bottom of the mutual aid to the newcomer, to the workman who lives temporarily without funds in the escale. Each of these gatherings is at the same time the occasion for "folkloristic" celebrations, reminding the members of the group of their customs and their country of origin.

369 177 563 The traditions which have been able to survive by being adapted to the new conditions of the society lose their importance to a certain extent in contact with new ideas and Western influence. We have already remarked that the notion of ethnic group is rapidly obliterated when the individual is transplanted for a long time in a city very far from his natal village. The family ties, and above all the [593] authority of the head of the family over each of its members, become extremely loose in the city. We see a breaking up of the subordination that subjected each of the members of a family to the paternal authority. The child is no longer compelled to adopt the trade of his father; he may choose the work that he thinks will suit him. The young girl is [584] rapidly becoming emancipated, and rare are the Thiès

/91 cont./

369 families in which the father imposes on the child the spouse
177 of his choice. The spread of the teaching of the Moslem and
563 Christian religions count for much in this loosening of the
[584] too confining ties of family tradition. This breaking up of
[593] ancient, too narrow social structures is not a strictly /92/
[182] urban phenomenon; it also occurs in the countryside, but with less force and with a certain delay.

369 The presence of the industrial bloc of the Dakar-Niger,
565 on the other hand, has had as an effect the formation of a
178 working class, which is a specifically urban phenomenon. Although the ancient system of castes does exist in human contacts, that of social class is little by little being substituted for it. In sum, there actually exists a superposition of the two systems, but the pre-eminence of the second is al-
[177] ready being affirmed. Through daily contacts and the rapid
[467] diffusion of social ideas coming from the West, the mass of
[474] workers is organized, it is grouped by syndicates, it has set up consumer co-operatives. Because of the great number of the members of this worker group, the workshops of the Dakar-Niger and, through repercussion, the city of Thiès itself have become the most active and the busiest centers
[468] of French West Africa. The strike that in 1948 paralyzed railroad traffic on the two lines (Dakar-Bamako and Dakar--Saint-Louis) for several months is certainly proof of the influence of a powerful and organized grouping, and a typical urban phenomenon.

369 Thus there exists in Thiès a somewhat special social
563 climate that sometimes makes the relations between Whites
578 and Blacks strained. Chiefly during these periods of social crises. But these tensions are always temporary and automatically disappear as soon as the conflict is settled.

369 A much more important problem that seems general
161 in all of the cities of Black Africa is that of the too rapid, if not excessive, swelling of the urban population. We have
[162] seen that the population of Thiès has almost doubled from 1945 (24,000 inhabitants) to 1953 (40,000 inhabitants). Dakar, Conakry, and Abidjan have grown in the same proportions.

/92 cont./

369 166 [162] All of the new elements that swell the urban quarters are young elements coming from the country; 32% of the population is made up of young people less than 14 years of age (15) whom the so-called facilities of the city have

15. In France this percentage is 24%, the figure estimated according to the census statistics given in the review Population, Oct.-Dec. 1954, p. 718.

attracted. The countryside is being drained of its energetic elements and the city does not have enough work to give to [464 574] those who come to settle there. A class of idlers and parasites is forming little by little, living on either the generous African hospitality or by expedients. This aspect of the social problem of the large African cities is one of the more urgent to be solved.

369 168 The public authorities are disturbed by this enormous swelling of the urban populations, which far exceeds the actual needs. It seems that none of the methods adopted up to now for decreasing them /93/ have given appreciable results. Perhaps the efforts that are now being made to improve the conditions of rural life and promote some modernization of agricultural techniques will allow the economic capacity of the countryside to increase and will curb the rural exodus. Greater stability among the urban population would then permit the establishment of more coherent and better balanced social structures.

Georges Savonnet.

[For information on the quarters of Thiès see category 116, pp. 12-20; on the economic activities of Thiès see category 116, pp. 21-27.]